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Letter dated 9 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to an extremely grave incident that occurred this week in the waters just off the Israeli coast.

This past Sunday, 6 May 2001, the Israeli Navy intercepted a boat, laden with large quantities of weapons, en route from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip. The vessel's cargo included 50 107 mm Katyusha rockets with a range of 8.5 kilometres, 4 SA-7 "Strella" anti-aircraft missiles with a 4-kilometre range, 20 rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPG), 120 anti-tank grenades, 2 60 mm mortars with 98 mortar shells, 70 mines, 30 Kalashnikov assault rifles and some 13,000 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition. The possession of such weaponry by the Palestinian Authority, in addition to constituting a flagrant violation of signed agreements between the sides, would enable a significant escalation of the violence. Katyusha rockets fired from locations inside the territories of the Palestinian Authority are capable of inflicting devastating damage on major Israeli population centres.

The ship's crew members indicated to Israeli authorities that the source of the weapons and other military materials is the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Yet that organization's minimal presence in the Gaza Strip is an overwhelming indication that the weapons were destined for other groups tied to the Palestinian leadership who are the only ones with the operational capability to distribute such weapons to trained persons who are capable of using them. Crew members further indicated that their instructions were merely to drop the weapons, which were carefully packaged in waterproof barrels, at a designated point near the coast of Gaza, whereupon the Palestinian security services would send out boats to retrieve them.

This incident comes amidst continuing Palestinian aggression and acts of terrorism directed against Israeli civilians. This morning, the bodies of two Israeli youths, both age 14, were found at the Haritoun Cave near the community of Tekoa. The pair had departed yesterday for a day hike in the area and, when they failed to

* A/56/50.

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return, their parents alerted the authorities, who began a search. Preliminary reports indicate that the two were stoned and stabbed to death.

Yesterday morning, 8 May 2001, Arieh Arnaldo Leon Agranionic, 48, was murdered by terrorists as he guarded the Binyamin farm, an outpost located several kilometres east of the community of Itamar. Agranionic was shot at close range with Kalashnikov rifles by terrorists, who then stole his M-16 rifle and fled on foot to a waiting vehicle. A group called the Hassan Kadi Brigade claimed responsibility for the murder.

At approximately 2 a.m. (local time) Tuesday morning, 8 May 2001, Aryeh Orlanda, a resident of Ma'ale Israel, was found murdered near the edge of the community. Orlanda had been shot and stabbed repeatedly and footprints found in the vicinity of the murder scene lead to a nearby Palestinian village.

On Sunday, 6 May 2001, five people were injured when a bomb exploded near a bus stop in the city of Petah Tikva. The bomb, which was packed with nails for maximum impact, had been planted in a garbage container between the bus stop and a bakery. The device was detonated shortly after 7 a.m. (local time), an hour when the bus stop was sure to be crowded with people on their way to work.

These incidents are merely the latest in a series of Palestinian attacks which have been detailed in my letters dated 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

Together with the seizure of the weapons, these incidents augur an increasingly unstable situation. Israel holds the Palestinian Authority responsible for these terrorist attacks, as well as for the smuggling of weapons in contravention of signed accords, in light of its continued unwillingness to take action against terrorist organizations, its encouragement of violence through the release of convicted terrorist prisoners, and the direct participation by organs of the Palestinian security services in planning and implementing attacks on Israelis. We call upon the Palestinian leadership to act immediately to abandon its aggressive posture and to restrain the terrorist elements that operate with near-complete freedom and impunity in the territory under its control.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 179 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative